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1921 WORLD COTTON CROP, 15,593,000 BALES

U. S. Department of Agriculture Reports Smallest World
Production Since 1900--American and Egyptian Show
Heaviest Falling Off--Total is 5,000,000 Bales
Less Than Last Season.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 21. World production of commercial cotton for 1921-22 is placed at 15,593,000 bales by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in a report issued to-day. This is the smallest crop since 1900, when the Department of Agriculture began publishing world figures, and compares with 20,650,000 bales in 1920, and with a ten-year average of 20,773,000 bales of 500 pounds gross weight based on Census figures of the total world commercial crop.

Two of the most important countries from a commercial standpoint, the United States and Egypt, which furnish the principal supply of cotton for American and European spindles, have this year what would be considered under normal consuming conditions, crop disasters. These countries with estimates of 8,340,000 and 684,000 bales, respectively, will produce only 61.4% of their total production last year, or 5,667,000 bales less than was produced in 1920. The cotton crop in China, South America, Mexico, and other countries, while not so important commercially, is smaller than usual. Russia which immediately before the war produced around 1,500,000 bales annually, has practically ceased to grow cotton.

Reduced consumption occasioned by the inability of Russia, Turkey and many other countries in Europe and throughout the world to buy cotton cloth since the war, forced the closing down of spinning and weaving establishments in the principal manufacturing countries last year. This in turn, curtailed the demand for raw cotton, and prices were forced down in the United States below the cost of production. Confronted with a large carryover, American farmers last spring voluntarily reduced their cotton acreage, and furthermore, the yield was doubtless reduced because comparatively little fertilizer was used and because of boll weevil ravages over practically the entire belt.

Over much of the American cotton belt unfavorable weather prevailed during the growing season and the condition of the crop was seriously affected. In Egypt much the same conditions prevailed. There was a heavy carryover, and cotton at planting time was selling below the cost of production. The Egyptian Government by decree prohibited the planting of more than one-third of the acreage held by owners and lessees to cotton, the season was late, less fertilizer was used, and the pink boll worm, which hibernated in the vast quantities of cotton carried over in the seed, did more damage than in recent years.

New Cotton-Growing Areas

Because of the recent gradual reduced production in those countries known for years as dependable commercial cotton-growing areas, much interest has recently been taken, especially by the British, in opening up new cotton-growing districts in different parts of the world. The British cotton-growing corporation has spent millions of pounds sterling in experiments and subsidies in Central and Southern Africa, Australia and other parts of the empire during the past fifteen years. The corporation recently obtained a royal charter, which means the backing of the British Government, and is now preparing to spend around \$5,000,000 annually in an effort to grow at least a part of the cotton consumed in the Manchester mills. This money will be spent very largely in Africa, outside of Egypt, in Australia and in the West Indies, where sea-island cotton growing is being encouraged. It is realized by the English spinners that Egypt and India have probably reached their maximum production, and the money spent in those countries will be mainly for the purpose of improving the quality of the staple. In the Egyptian Sudan construction on the large irrigation project at the confluence of the Blue and White Nile is being held in abeyance at the present time on account of political conditions.

While it is generally conceded that millions of acres of land in Africa outside of Egypt, and millions more in Australia, could doubtless be made to produce good cotton, the efforts of the English spinners to grow their own cotton up to now, it is admitted, have been practically a failure. From the vast expenditure of money in the past twenty years, the largest annual production in experimental regions up to date has totaled less than 150,000 bales, which is only a little more than the average annual production of several of the largest cotton-producing counties in the United States.

The total production in the British Empire (outside of Egypt and India) the present year will be less than 150,000 bales. Before cotton can be grown profitably on a competitive scale in Africa, the natives must be disposed to work regularly, which is a hard proposition in any tropical country; transportation and marketing problems must be solved, and some irrigation projects completed or extended. The French are planning also to encourage cotton production in the French Sudan and their other African possessions.

Mesopotamia which, following the war, was looked upon by the English as a possible source of supply for considerable quantities of cotton, has been abandoned as a cotton-producing area, at least for the present, because of the expense attached to the necessary irrigation projects, and the unstable political conditions in that country.

The Australian government is very ambitious to establish cotton growing as one of its imperial assets. Cotton was first planted in Australia following the American Civil War; average production at that time amounting to about 200 pounds of lint cotton per acre on an area of 14,000 acres. Later, because of the slump in price, cotton growing there was practically abandoned. Recently in Queensland and some other states, interest in cotton growing has developed, and the British Cotton Growing Association has guaranteed the Australians .1s.6d., or about 36 cents a pound at the normal rate of exchange, for all cotton delivered in Liverpool. Production is estimated at about 4,000 bales this year. The Commonwealth and the State Governments have made available the sum of 5,000,000 pounds sterling for extending irrigation projects on the Murray River and its tributaries, and up-to-date ginning plants are being installed. The efforts at present are confined largely to growing the longer stapled varieties. American Pima and other long lint varieties from this country have been introduced, it being feared that imported Egyptian seed may harbor the pink boll worm.

Cotton Growing in South America

Most South American countries produce some cotton. Brazil with an annual crop of approximately 500,000 bales, and Peru with 150,000 bales; are the leading producing countries in South America. Production is increasing in Argentina, which grew 26,000 bales this year.

Cotton was cultivated in South America by the Indians several centuries before the Spaniards conquered the country. There are two main varieties grown. The native tree, or perennial, cotton grows wild, but when cultivated is planted at intervals of from 5 to 15 years. Left alone the plants will grow 15 to 20 feet high, but it is pruned annually, the crop being picked from the new growth each year. Tree cotton grows in nearly all parts of tropical South America. The seed of the cotton planted annually came originally from America and Egypt, and is generally badly mixed. The best staple comes from Peru, where better care is taken in preparing the cotton for export. There are millions of acres of land in South America suitable for cotton growing, but there has been little advancement in recent years. The Governments of Argentina and Brazil are now encouraging the production of cotton on a larger scale, and South America, in a few years, may annually export cotton in larger quantities than at present.

East Indian Cotton Production

India produces more cotton annually than any country in the world outside the United States. Average annual production for the past eleven years was about 3,600,000 bales of 500 pounds, grown on a little more than 22,000,000 acres. A small portion of the cotton acreage is under irrigation, but the greater part of the crop is planted following the annual monsoons, receiving usually but little moisture afterwards. Cotton is picked every month in the year in some parts of India, but the yield per acre is very small, averaging about 80 pounds of lint annually. Cotton has been grown in India for thousands of years, and numerous insect pests, including the pink boll worm, which probably originated in that country, take a heavy annual toll. The boll weevil, prevalent in most cotton producing areas in the western



hemisphere, has never appeared in any country in the eastern hemisphere.

By far the major portion of the Indian cotton crop is very short staple, averaging from $3/8$ to $3/4$ inches in length, the bulk of the crop being about $5/8$ inches. More than 95 per cent of the American crop has a staple $7/8$ inches and longer. Indian cotton does not compete with the best American or Egyptian growth in the cotton mills of either Europe or America. Only about 50,000 bales of Indian cotton is consumed by American and English spindles annually, while 81,105 bales of American cotton was received in Bombay last year.

Indian cotton mills consume about 50 per cent of the annual production of that country. Of the cotton exported about 70 per cent goes to Japan and China.

Cotton Production in China.

The total production of cotton in China is problematical. The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic estimates the average production for the three years 1909-11 as 4,181,300 bales. Much of the cotton produced is manufactured in a primitive way for local consumption on hand-loom in the homes, and is not regarded as commercial cotton. An estimate from the Chinese Cotton Mill Owners Association gave as the area planted to cotton in 1920 4,300,000 acres and the production 1,868,000 bales of 500 pounds gross weight. This is probably the cotton acreage grown for commercial purposes. Most of the Chinese commercial cotton contains very short lint, similar in staple to the Indian crop, and is manufactured in the Chinese cotton mills, that portion of the crop exported going principally to Japan.

Recently Chinese mill owners have been experimenting with longer lint varieties, having imported considerable quantities of seed from the United States. China imports comparatively little cotton, although some American cotton finds its way to the Chinese mills.

Cotton in Russia.

The only considerable amount of Asiatic cotton which will compare favorably with the American product is that grown in Russia, a large portion of which before the war was equal to the average Texas product. Russia developed rapidly as a cotton producing country before the World War. In 1890 production was only 137,000 bales of 500 lbs. In 1912 this had increased to

1,343,000 bales. During and following the war cotton production gave way to other crops and the yield this year is estimated at about 50,000 bales. It is stated that there is ample cotton-growing land in Russia to produce approximately 3,500,000 bales of cotton annually under normal conditions. As in Egypt, all cotton in Russia is grown under irrigation, and to increase the prewar production materially, additional irrigation works would be necessary.

Japan and Korea together produce upwards of 100,000 bales of cotton annually which is absorbed in the Japanese cotton mills.

The following table shows the annual world production of cotton for the years 1914, 1919, and 1920, and estimates for 1921.

Cotton: Production in Principal
Cotton Growing Countries.

(Bales 478 pounds net)

Country	1914 (Bales)	1919 (Bales)	1920 (Bales)	1921 (Bales) ^a
United States....	16,135,000	11,421,000	13,440,000	8,340,000
Mexico.....	130,000	362,000	205,000	165,000
Brazil.....	460,000	560,000	431,000	560,000
Peru.....	107,000	172,000	157,000	146,000 ^b
Argentina.....	4,000	15,000	16,000	26,000
British India....	4,167,000	4,637,000	2,845,000	3,623,000 ^c
Japan & Korea....	38,000	94,000	105,000	120,000
China.....	784,000	1,150,000	1,868,000	1,650,000
Russia.....	1,309,000	440,000	90,000	50,000
British Africa...	54,000	60,000	81,000	75,000
Egypt.....	1,337,000	1,154,000	1,251,000	684,000
Australia.....	---	1,000	1,000	4,000
All others.....	150,000	155,000	160,000	150,000
Total.....	24,675,000	20,221,000	20,650,000	15,593,000

^aEstimates based on the best information available at this time.
Figures subject to modification from later reports.

^bEstimate received by cable, December 10, 1921.

^cThird official forecast, December 15, 1921, received by cable from the Indian Government, by the Bureau of Markets and Crop Estimates, December 21, 1921.

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